

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 103035

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OEXC, TGEN, CH, US

SUBJECT: INFORMAL US-PRC EXCHANGES

REF: PEKING 977

1. WE HAVE RECENTLY NOTED VARIOUS SIGNS OF QUICKENING CHINESE INTEREST IN EXPANDING NON-OFFICIAL SCIENCE EXCHANGES WITH THE US AS WELL AS WITH OTHER WESTERN SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITIES. THIS DEVELOPMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH CHINA'S CURRENT REEMPHASIS ON IMPROVING ITS SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS AND PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR US PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS, MANY OF WHICH ARE EAGER TO DEVELOP COOPERATION RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHINESE COUNTERPARTS. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDE: THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY-PRC TUMOR STUDY GROUP RECIPROCAL EXCHANGE; THE INSTITUTE OF ELECTRONICS AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS EXCHANGE WITH THE CHINESE ELECTRONICS SOCIETY; AND THE OHIO ACADEMY OF SCIENCES' EXCHANGE WITH THE CAS. IN A SENSE THE CHINESE VISIT TO FERMI IS ALSO RECIPROCAL IN THAT IT GREW OUT OF EARLIER VISITS TO CHINA BY AMERICAN PHYSICISTS.

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TRONICS AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS EXCHANGE WITH THE CHINESE ELECTRONICS SOCIETY; AND THE OHIO ACADEMY OF SCIENCES' EXCHANGE WITH THE CAS. IN A SENSE THE CHINESE VISIT TO FERMI IS ALSO RECIPROCAL IN THAT IT GREW OUT OF EARLIER VISITS TO CHINA BY AMERICAN PHYSICISTS.

2. EXPANSION OF THIS FORM OF CONTACT, WHICH BYPASSES OFFI-

CIAL CHANNELS, OBVIOUSLY POSES SOME RISK OF UNDERCUTTING
THE FACILITATED SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY

THE CSC. WHILE WE DOUBT THAT THIS RISK WILL ASSUME
ALARMING PROPORTIONS OVER THE NEAR TERM, WE WOULD BE DIS-
TURBED BY ANY EROSION IN THE FACILITATED EXCHANGE PROGRAM
AS A RESULT OF FREER CHINESE ACCESS THROUGH PRIVATE CHAN-
NELS TO THE US SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY. WE STRONGLY BELIEVE
THAT IT REMAINS IN THE BASIC INTEREST OF BOTH SIDES FOR
CSC TO MAINTAIN, AND EVEN EXPAND, ITS VISIBLE ROLE IN THE
FACILITATED EXCHANGE PROGRAM, WHICH CONTINUES TO SERVE THE
POLITICAL FUNCTION OF SYMBOLIZING THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN
US-PRC RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE.
APART FROM THE POLITICAL SYMBOLISM INVOLVED, WE BELIEVE
THE CHINESE ARE AWARE THAT THE CSC AND THE NATIONAL COM-
MITTEE ON US-CHINA RELATIONS PROVIDE BROADER AND OFTEN
MORE SUBSTANTIVE PROGRAMS FOR CHINESE DELEGATIONS THAN
WOULD BE POSSIBLE UNDER OTHER, STRICTLY PRIVATE AUSPICES.

3. WE AND ICA AGREE THAT EXPANSION OF UNOFFICIAL CONTACTS
WITH THE CHINESE, ESPECIALLY IN SCIENTIFIC FIELDS, IS IN
OUR LONG-TERM INTEREST. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES,
SUCH EXPANSION SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING NATURALLY, AND WE
DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY OVERT ACT OF ENCOURAGEMENT IS
NECESSARY OR ADVISABLE FOR THE MOMENT. AT SOME POINT, THE
ISSUE OF RECIPROCITY MAY REQUIRE OUR ATTENTION, BUT AT
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THIS NASCENT STAGE IN THE GROWTH OF NON-FACILITATED EX-
CHANGES, US INSTITUTIONS THEMSELVES ARE PROBABLY IN A
BETTER POSITION TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION. WE NOTE THAT A
DEGREE OF RECIPROCITY IS ALREADY PRESENT IN THE NON-
OFFICIAL EXCHANGES, AND WE BELIEVE THAT ANY OFFICIAL
APPROACH TO THE CHINESE ON THE SUBJECT WOULD BE PREMATURE
UNTIL THE PATTERN THAT THESE PRIVATE CONTACTS ARE LIKELY
TO TAKE HAS BECOME CLEARER. CHRISTOPHER

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